



THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
WATER RESOURCES COMMISSION

---

**Meeting Minutes for October 10, 2002**

**Members in Attendance:**

Mark P. Smith	Designee, EOE A
Marilyn Contreas	Designee, DHCD
Mike Gildesgame	Designee, DEM
Cynthia Giles	Designee, DEP
Gerard Kennedy	Designee, DFA
Karen Pelto	Designee, DFWELE
Joe McGinn	Designee, MDC
Richard Butler	Public Member
Gary Clayton	Public Member
Bob Zimmerman	Public Member

**Others in Attendance:**

Vicki Gartland	DEM
Bruce Taggart	USGS
Margaret Kearns	Riverways Program
Richard Hatten	Mass. Groundwater Association
Carl Gustafson	NRCS
Sharon McGregor	EOEA

---

**Agenda Item #1: Executive Director's Report**

- The budget shortfall in the state continues to have severe impacts to environmental programs. Budget problems for all agencies impact our ability to conduct core programs. Most recently, DEP had to lay off 50 employees.
- Charlton is once again requesting a delay on the vote for their Request for Determination of Insignificance. The Town continues to work with DEP on their water problems.
- On Oct 18<sup>th</sup>, there will be an event to celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Clean Water Act at Deer Island.
- EPA has announced a national watershed initiative. They are budgeting \$21 million. They are soliciting proposal which must be recommended by governors. They will be awarding two grants per region.
- The Secretary gave a major policy address on water issues last week. This will be discussed later in the agenda.
- The annual solicitation for ACOE projects will be going out next week. We hope to be able to make recommendations to the Secretary by March.

Gartland provided an update on the hydrologic conditions:

- There was above normal rainfall in the Southeast region and Cape Cod. These were areas that had been at a drought watch level. There was not as much rainfall in other areas, but levels were in the normal range.
- Groundwater levels are still below normal across the state.
- Streamflow levels are still below normal across the state. Streamflow has been below normal for about a year, with the exception of the month of June.
- Reservoir levels are at 60-80% full.
- Fire danger levels have been moderate.
- The Drought Mitigation Center depicts Massachusetts as being under drought conditions.
- Cumulative rainfall for the Water Year is 82%.
- The next Drought Task Force is meeting on October 31<sup>st</sup>.

**Agenda Item #2: Vote – Policy on Lawn and Landscape Water Conservation**

This was reviewed at the August meeting. The latest version was sent to all commenters. No additional comments were received. Smith acknowledged Hatten of the Massachusetts Groundwater Association which has been following this issue closely. Minor changes to clarify the document and eliminate typos were suggested by Commission members and others.

Gildesgame noted that this was an addendum to the 1992 Water Conservation Standards. It is not a separate policy.

<b>V O T E</b>	Clayton moved with a second by Giles to approve the Lawn and Landscape Water Conservation Policy Standards and Recommendations, dated 8/21/02, as amended, as an addendum to the 1992 Water Conservation Standards
	The vote was nine in favor, with one abstention.

**Agenda Item #3: Discussion – Ecosystem Restoration Initiative**

McGregor stated that there are individual restoration programs operating under the environmental agencies. These programs have started to work together with the idea to coordinate these programs formally to achieve whole ecosystem restoration. To start, a pilot project would be established, most likely in the Ipswich River basin, as a model for ecosystem restoration across the state. This would also build on the work done by the aquatic habitat restoration group and learned from the difficulties this group has had in getting restoration projects permitted. The initiative aims to accomplish regulatory efficiency. It is hoped that federal funds may be available for the pilot project.

Clayton asked if this initiative will be limited to public agencies and if private parties or non-profit entities would be able to do this as well. McGregor replied that the focus has been mainly on those projects initiated by the state, but this is still under discussion.

Smith stated that a definition of what a restoration project is needed, so at this time, it might be more manageable to restrict it to public agencies. Clayton stated that criteria are needed to

evaluate the success of restoration projects, and the Commonwealth needs a clear policy on the management of invasive species. Gildesgame stated that there was a state-wide plan on aquatic invasive species that is currently being reviewed by the federal government. Zimmerman stated that municipal permitting can be more onerous than state permitting. This needs to be considered as well.

Smith asked if an endorsement by the WRC was being requested. McGregor said that an actual policy would be presented to the WRC in May. She asked for approval of the timeline. Giles was concerned about DEP's roles in this, given the cutbacks the agency is experiencing. Peltó said they were proposing more process, rather than regulatory changes. The question is how to look at these restoration projects differently from development projects.

McGinn cautioned about limiting projects only to public agencies because it sets up potential conflicts within the regulated community (i.e. private entities proposing restoration would be subject to different procedures than public agencies proposing restoration) however, he said that at this stage of development, he could vote to support this initiative. He suggested that when this comes back in May, there should be a discussion of how the streamlining could be extended to all parties proposing restoration projects.

<b>V O T E</b>	<p>McGinn moved with a second by Clayton to support the EOEa ecological restoration initiative proposal of 9/12/02, initially limited to projects sponsored by public agencies, and upon the WRC approval, of the task group membership and schedule.</p> <p>The vote was unanimous of those present.</p>
----------------------------	---

#### **Agenda Item #4: Presentation – “Securing our Water Future”**

Water is a growing issue for the commonwealth requiring innovative solutions. The buildout analysis shows communities what should be considered for the future. Buildout analyses projected the amount of water that might be needed to meet the buildout demands. The approach is to provide communities with the tools needed to address the issues, which are mainly local issues. The focus was on the environmental resources which need to be protected to have a viable environmental system in the community. This should be used as the basis for planning for development of housing, etc.

How do we make sure that water resources are protected? The idea of creating bioreserves is the core of the Secretary's land protection strategy. These integrate all resource protection efforts. Most of the areas targeted for protection due to rare species, etc., are related to water supplies. The aquifer lands acquisition program has been revived. Through that program a total of 7000 acres have been protected.

Based on the buildouts, future water demand was calculated to be an estimated 440 million additional gallons per day. (60% more than we use today). The greatest amount of recent development has been around the I-495 corridor. This region currently uses 63 mgd. At buildout, another 47 mgd will be needed. Excess capacity is estimated to be about an average of 15 mgd. In this area, buildout may reached in 20 to 30 yrs. But other regions may not meet buildout in our lifetime.

Buildouts have given a first-cut snap-shot of the potential needs and a starting point to talk about how needs can be met. Average day demands are not the issue. Some existing water supply sources are having environmental impacts today. Excess capacity may be what is used to meet peak demands.

Locating new supplies is getting more difficult. Now is the time to protect potential future water supplies. What is the long-range vision for the state? MWRA is a good example of a system with long-range vision. A system was built that could last into the next century. Now the MWRA is concentrating on water conservation and investment in the system. We now need to maintain local supplies where we can, and back this up with regional interconnections, state-wide. In addition, desalinization is an option.

The Southeast region has huge potential future demands but also established resources that could begin to address these needs. An integrated regional water supply system could be developed here. Water conservation also plays a large part in securing our water future. Most communities can save between 15-30% of their water through conservation. In addition, the principle of keeping water local through wastewater and stormwater management should be incorporated.

Three main steps:

- Preserve what we have
- Identify and protect what we need
- Balance our water budget

The top 10 list to secure our water future:

- 10 Within 10 years, identify and protect the water supply needed for the future in eastern Massachusetts
- 9 Within 15 years, identify and protect the water supply needed for the future in the rest of the Commonwealth
- 8 Within 10 years, communities should save at least 15% of current water demand through conservation and leak detection
- 7 Within 2 years, develop a statewide streamflow policy
- 6 Continue to focus state and local land acquisition programs to protect existing and future water supply sources
- 5 Immediately work to expand the State Revolving Loan Fund to support local land acquisition around water resources and water supplies
- 4 Consider expanding the bottle bill to include bottled water and use the unreturned deposits to fund state programs and water conservation grants
- 3 Within the next 18 months, deliver the results of water assets project to every community in the Commonwealth
- 2 Help communities complete local plans to protect green infrastructure and balance their water budget for the community and watershed
- 1 Inspire every citizen to take responsibility for the environment and their water use

Meeting adjourned

---

Minutes approved 9/9/04